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Over 32,000 New Mexican Children Could Receive Health Care Coverage Under New SCHIP Bill

New Report Shows Positive Impact of SCHIP; Luján Supported Legislation to Cover Children

Washington, DC - A report released yesterday by Families USA analyzed the recently passed SCHIP legislation and detailed its positive impact on New Mexican families. According to the report, 32,100 uninsured New Mexican children could be covered under the reauthorization of SCHIP, reducing the number of uninsured children in the state by 35 percent. Rep. Ben Ray Luján voted for this legislation, which will provide health coverage for 11 million low-income, uninsured children nationwide.

"I joined my colleagues in support of an expansion of health care coverage for low-income, uninsured children that will help children and families throughout the state. This report shows the real positive impact of this legislation," said Luján. "Over 32,000 children in New Mexico could receive health care coverage, which is especially critical as families in New Mexico struggle in this difficult economy. In a time of rising unemployment, it is especially important to make sure that parents are able to get their children the health care they need to stay healthy and active."

The State Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (SCHIP) passed the House 289 to 139. The legislation, H.R. 2, will help working families across the state who are struggling to provide health care coverage for their children. Last Congress, President Bush twice vetoed similar legislation.

The bipartisan legislation will preserve health care coverage for the 7.1 million children currently covered by SCHIP and extend coverage to 4.1 million uninsured children who are currently eligible for the program, but not enrolled. The legislation would cover almost half of the 8.7 million children uninsured nationally.

In New Mexico, 16,525 children receive health care coverage through the successful SCHIP program. This legislation will preserve coverage for these children and work toward covering the 93,000 New Mexican children who lack health insurance coverage. According to the report, with 32,100 uninsured children who could be covered under the reauthorization of SCHIP, the number of uninsured children in New Mexico could be reduced by 35 percent. This bill increases the SCHIP allotments for New Mexico by 277%--from \$52 million to \$196.2 million.

"Making sure New Mexico's children have health care coverage is the right thing to do," said Luján. "By passing this legislation in the House, we are investing in our children's future. Healthy children attend school, participate in after school activities, and are better equipped to put themselves on a path to success. The House passed this important legislation and took a step toward preserving health care coverage for 16,525 New Mexican children currently covered by SCHIP and insuring 32,100 New Mexican children, according to this new report. This legislation is an important step to getting our country back on track and helping families in New Mexico."

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was created in 1997 to provide health care coverage for children in families that earn too little to afford private health insurance for their children, but too much to qualify for Medicaid.

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